

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **Norton Sound Red King Crab Summer Commercial Fishery Closed Area Reduced**

There are 35 permit holders registered for the open access fishery and 30 crabbers have made at least one delivery. To date, approximately 145,000 pounds have been harvested out of the total GHL of 495,600 pounds. Based on the current catch rate, the GHL is projected to be reached in mid-to late-September.

According to regulation 5 AAC 34.935, the department may, "by emergency order, reduce by small increments, the closed waters...to allow the commercial king crab fishery to efficiently obtain the allowable harvest of red king crab."

Beginning 12:00 noon on August 1, the closed area boundary between 166°15'W (Sledge Island) and 163°30'W (near Square Rock) will be moved north by 3 miles, to 64°18'N from the current 64°15'N. The closed area boundary east of 163°30' (which cuts through the middle of statistical area 636401) will remain the same. Figure 1 (attached) shows the new boundary line.

Analysis of results from the spring tagging project and known distribution patterns from trawl surveys suggests this expanded fishing area will allow additional access to legal king crabs while minimizing handling of non-target king crabs such as females and juvenile crabs. Due to the particularly large biomass of crab available for all fisheries, this small increase in area available to commercial harvest is not expected to adversely impact the subsistence king crab fisheries or the future health of the king crab population. ADF&G will have observers on select fishing boats to see what pots are catching in the newly opened fishing area.

For any questions regarding fishing please call Fish & Game in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271.

Good luck and good crabbing.

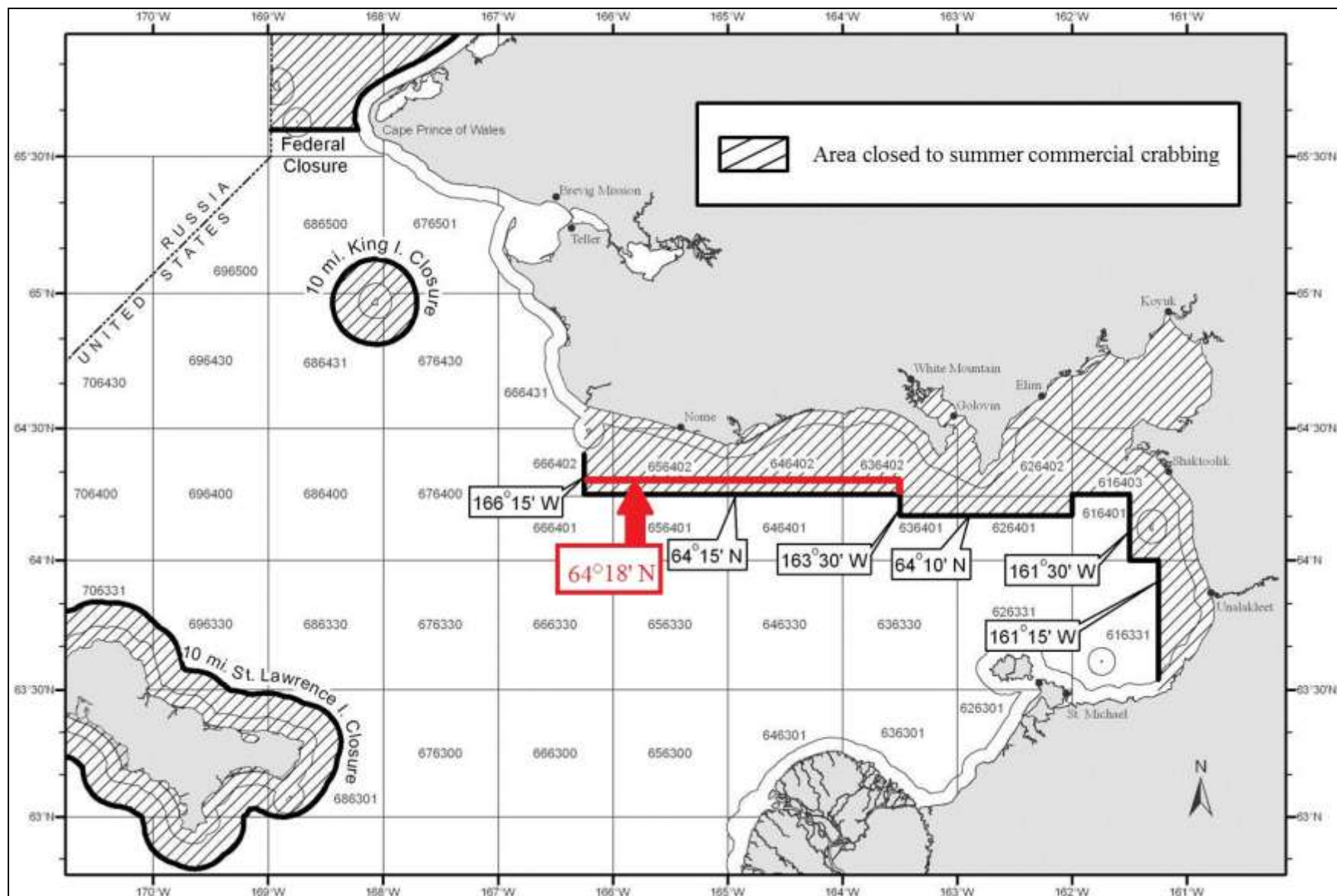


Figure 1.—Beginning 12:00 noon on August 1, the closed area boundary between 166°15'W (Sledge Island) and 163°30'W (near Square Rock) will be moved north by 3 miles, to 64°18'N from the current 64°15'N. The closed area boundary east of 163°30' (which cuts through the middle of statistical area 636401) will remain the same.